

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2009

The Honorable Peter Orszag
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Orszag:

We respectfully request that you increase international family planning assistance funding in President Obama's budget to \$1 billion, including \$65 million for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This increase will reverse a decade of inadequate funding and will prevent grave consequences for the health and well-being of women, children and families across the globe for generations.

Since 1995, international family planning funds have declined by 40 percent in real dollars while the number of women of reproductive age in the developing world has increased by 300 million. Today, 200 million women want but lack access to contraceptives, and this demand is projected to rise by 40 percent over the next 15 years. Our request represents the U.S. fair share of the amount necessary to address the existing unmet need for family planning. By doing so, more than 18 million additional women in the developing world would be able to use modern methods of contraception.

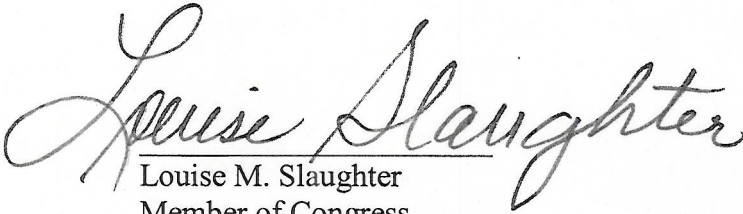
Inadequate funding for international family planning holds grave consequences for the health and well-being of women, families and communities across the globe. More than half a million women die from pregnancy related causes and childbirth complications every year. The vast majority of these preventable deaths occur in the poorest countries in the world where there are limited services to promote safe motherhood and a lack of basic health infrastructure. Further, 50 percent of infant deaths result from poor maternal health and inadequate safe delivery care. Family planning is paramount to turn the tide on maternal and infant mortality.

The direct and rippling positive impact of an investment in family planning is clear. Slowing the population's rapid growth will ease pressure on natural resources and decrease emissions that lead to global warming. Given the ability to control the size and spacing of their children, families' standards of living rise and communities are lifted out of cyclical poverty. Family planning encourages social stability in the developing world, which in turn, assures our national security. Access to reproductive health care and family planning is the hallmark in our effort to advance the rights and empowerment of women. All the while from a fiscal standpoint, we know an investment now in family planning holds real cost savings for the American taxpayers' in the future.

The U.S supports family planning projects in more than fifty developing nations. Each year, these programs help prevent 60 million unplanned births, 105 million abortions and nearly 3 million infant deaths. These projects promote safe motherhood initiatives, combat sexual and gender-based violence, and prevent and treat HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, reducing the risk of mother to child transmission.

For a healthier world and planet, we firmly support strengthening international family planning programs and urge you to provide one billion dollars for international family planning assistance in the President's Budget. We appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
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Shelly Berkley
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Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

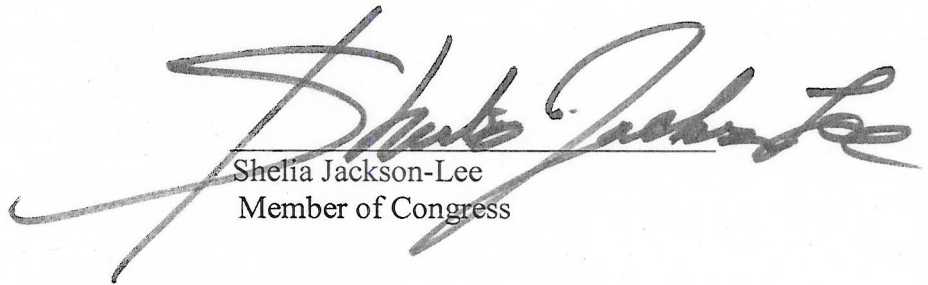
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Member of Congress

Maurice D. Hinchey
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Paul W. Hodes
Member of Congress

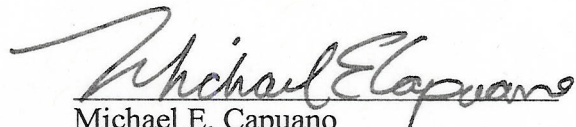


Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress

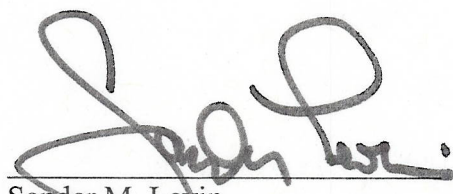


Shelia Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress

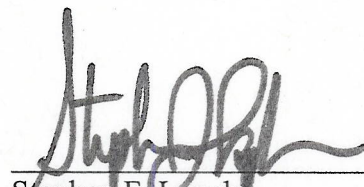
Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress



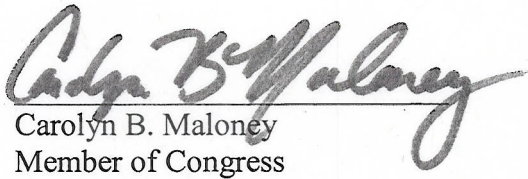
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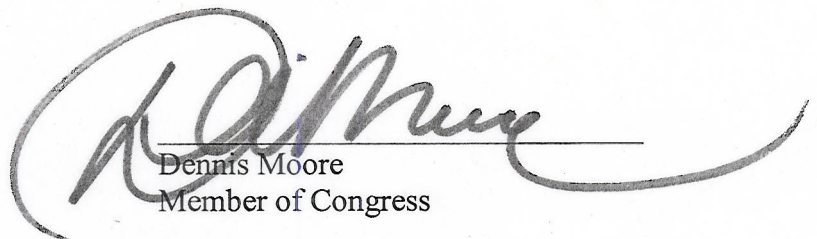


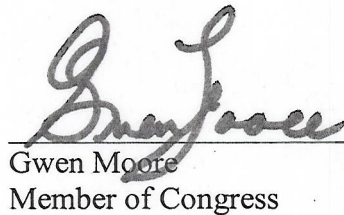
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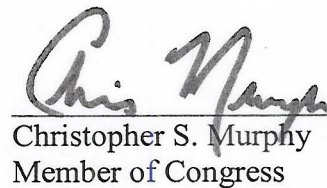

Carolyn B. Maloney
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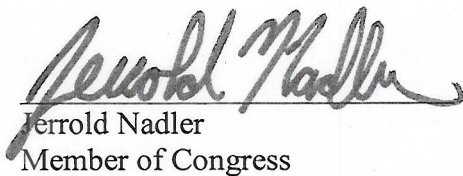
Tammy Baldwin
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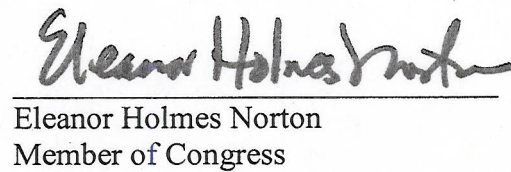

Jim McDermott
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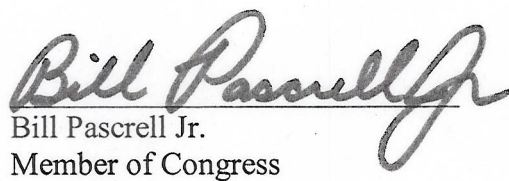

Dennis Moore
Member of Congress

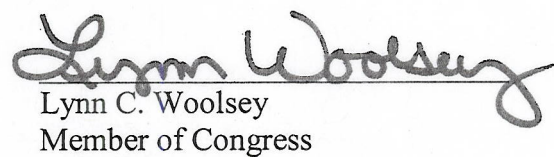

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress

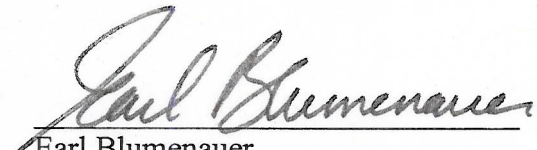

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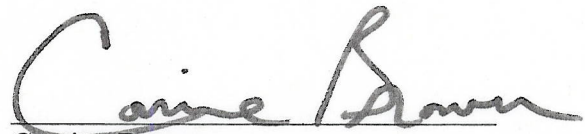
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